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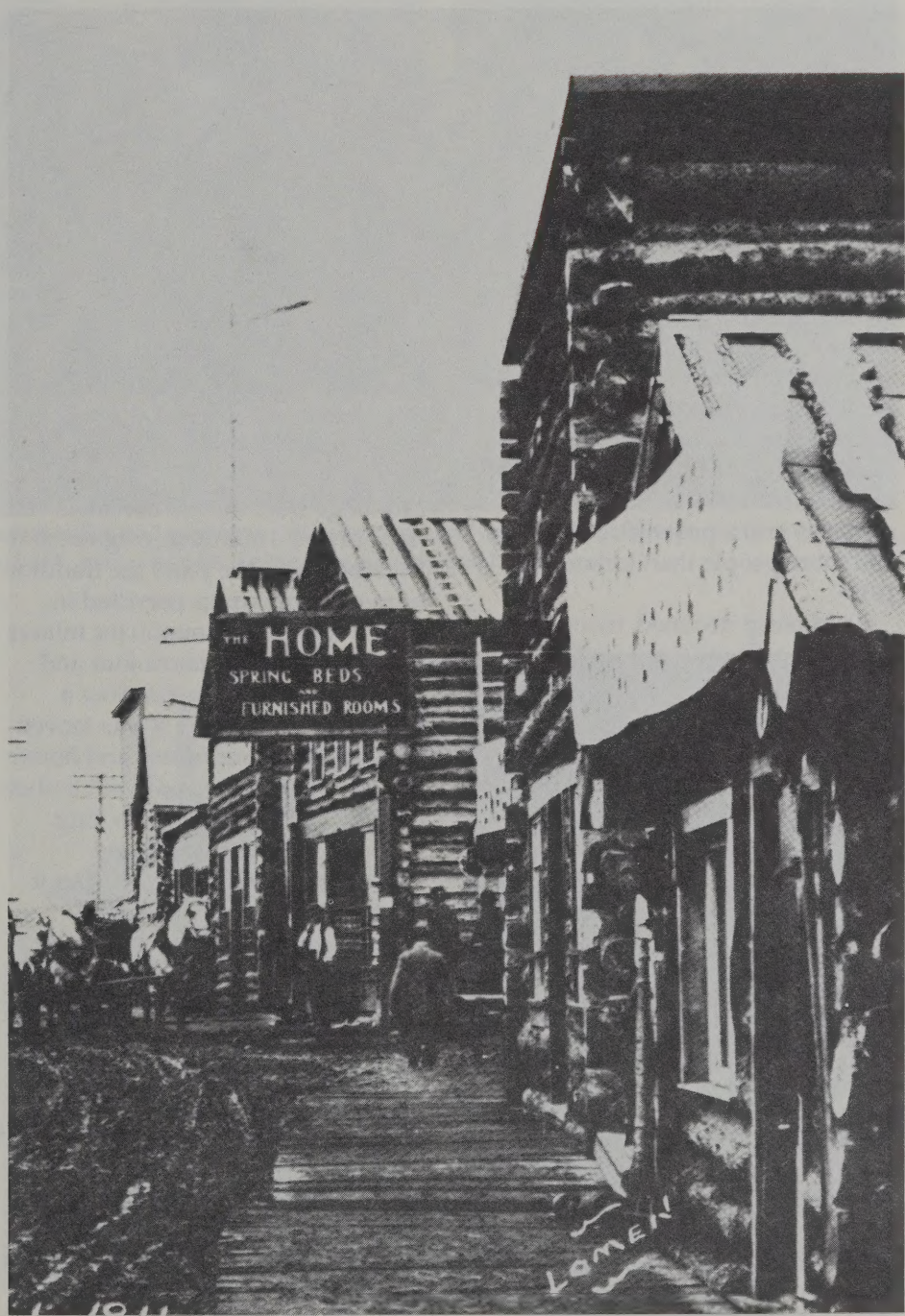
Historians take a close look at the old gold town of Flat

I N S I D E

Study looks at steelhead
trout in the Gulkana
River

Pipeline update:
contracts go out for
improvements; oversight
steps up

Alaska Fire Service
upgrades mountaintop
radios



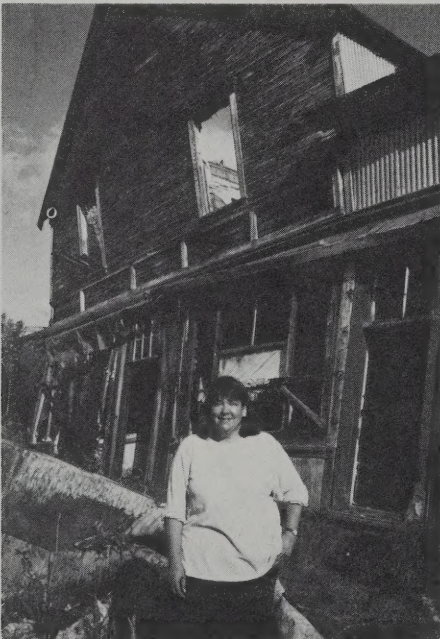
The bustling gold town of Flat, Alaska, in 1911. The town is located near Iditarod on the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

Researchers find historic treasures in the old gold town of Flat

Seventy-six years ago, George Riley, the most hated man in Flat, Alaska, was shot and killed. The reportedly contemptible owner of the Riley Investment Company met his demise when he refused to pay one of his employees, Milo, a Montenegrin woodcutter. Milo reciprocated by shooting him in the back.

It was Flat's first murder. Like any turn-of-the-century gold town, Flat had its share of crime, but its existence centered mostly on the lives of gold miners. This vibrant little community on the Iditarod Trail was where miners came to get their supplies and recharge after weeks of backbreaking labor. Both Flat and the nearby town of Iditarod sprang up as mining camps in 1910. Flat was the leading settlement on Otter Creek. Iditarod was the commercial center of the Innoko-Iditarod placer district—for a while. Flat had 400 residents and a post office by 1912, and more people than Iditarod by 1917.

As Iditarod declined, many of its



BLM archaeologist Julie Steele stands in front of the old Northern Commercial store at Iditarod.



The remains of Tootsie's bathhouse in Flat. Tootsie reportedly ran the town's red light district in the 1930s.

buildings were moved to Flat. In fact, most of Flat's buildings originated in Iditarod. Over the years the tradition of moving buildings persisted in Flat. It wasn't uncommon for miners to rework mining claims four and five times, and if a business or a home was in the way, it was moved. Most of the 80 businesses and homes standing in Flat today are not in their original locations. This was long suspected by Bureau of Land Management archaeologists, but it wasn't until an inventory was conducted last summer that these suspicions were confirmed.

State of Alaska historians spent the summer of 1993 inventorying historic structures of Flat and Iditarod under a cooperative agreement with BLM. BLM oversees the management of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, and inventorying its cultural resources is a management objective.

Rolfe Buzzell, a State of Alaska historian and project leader, says, "Flat has the largest concentration of gold rush buildings still standing in

Alaska."

Buzzell's work began with the development of site maps on which every historic building was located and described. That was the easy part. "Clearing the vegetation which hid many of the buildings was an enormous task," he said. Buzzell was assisted by BLM archaeologist Julie Steele, three college interns and a volunteer. Then they documented artifacts and each building's condition.

To learn more about the historic buildings, Buzzell interviewed John Miscovich, John Fullerton, Mark and Sherry Kepler, and Peter Bagoy, the remaining residents of Flat. All have active mining claims and their families have lived in the area for years. They told him stories of Flat's early days, its people and of course, the use and movement of the buildings.

Their stories were colorful. They told him about the fire in 1924, about the tramway that once connected Flat with Iditarod, and about the discreet but active red light district



Flat boasted an active social life, where costumed ladies and gentlemen attended balls and dances. Residents kept out of the mud by strolling on the boardwalks which led to the bank, bars, cleaners, bakery, restaurants and hotels.

located outside of town. The red light district, they said, was run in the 1930s by a black madam named Tootsie. All spoke affectionately of Tootsie, who they said was the first black woman in Alaska and who later gained prominence and social standing.

During World War II the President halted all gold mining in Alaska. There was a resurgence after the war, but mining began a steady decline. Now the inventory of historic structures has brought new life to the town. "These structures give us a rare opportunity to research and record a 1910 boom town in a very authentic setting," says BLM archaeologist Julie Steele. "The Iditarod National Historic Trail is rich with history and we hope others will learn of its historical significance through our efforts."

—Danielle Allen



State historian and project leader Rolfe Buzzell (second from right) and volunteers pose in front of the post office in Flat.

Stalking northern steelhead trout

BLM funds study to look at trout habitat in the Gulkana River

Steelhead trout found in Alaska's Gulkana National Wild River and its tributaries are considered by many to be among the northernmost occurrences in North America. To learn more about these hardy fish, the BLM's Glennallen District is funding a study on juvenile steelhead and rainbow trout habitat in this region.

The stock is suspected to be fairly small and possibly vulnerable. Because juvenile steelhead (anadromous) and rainbow (landlocked) trout are visually indistinguishable and may share the same spawning and rearing areas, BLM is interested in data on both.

The Alaska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska Fairbanks, is conducting the study. Also participating by providing equipment, consultation and/or volunteers, are the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Fairbanks chapter of Trout Unlimited.

"We're trying to meet our responsibilities in terms of wildlife management," says Dennis Tol, BLM's state fisheries biologist. "If all the spawning pairs returning to the system spawn in one place, the entire stock could easily be wiped out. Information about where crucial habitats are in the river could affect BLM's management, and is important to the preservation of this resource."

James Reynolds, who is managing this cooperative effort for UAF, observed, "When a species lives on the edge of its range, in an area that's marginal, stocks are never large."

He said that when they started the



Fairbanks hydrologist John Spielman holds a rainbow trout located in Lower Canyon Rapids last July. Finding the locations of adult fish provides clues to juvenile fish sites.

Monica Haycox

project, "Because the stock is so small, there was some concern about locating the fish. It wasn't as difficult as we feared, and we regard the first field season as successful and that the results will be very useful to BLM."

Chris Stark and Steve Brink, both seeking Master's degrees in fisheries from the UAF, are performing the study. They made several trips down the Gulkana River during the 1993 field season, exploring the study area, searching for spawning and rearing grounds, and gathering the data.

Stark says that knowing where the fish *aren't* "is just as important" to the study of habitat.

Brink adds, "You have to look at the whole system with an open mind."

Tol agrees. "Finding information about each fish contributes to information about the population itself: lengths, weights, scale samples for aging. The trout feed on salmon eggs, and rainbows have been known to bump a salmon in

order to get it to release an egg, so the presence of salmon is a factor, too. They'll be looking at all fish in the system while gathering information about steelhead spawning and rearing habitats."

Stark theorizes that steelhead trout may be able to sustain a population so far north because of unique geologic and hydrologic features. Fairbanks hydrologist John Spielman has also been contributing research to the study.

"Fish habitat is directly influenced by what happens in the entire watershed—not just the river—and activities on adjoining lands have an impact on habitat," notes Tol.

Different segments of the river system itself may play distinct roles in the fish life cycle as well.

Reynolds observes, "We've delineated spawning areas where the eggs are deposited, tracked the young of the year out of the nest, and observed two- to three-year-old juveniles, but the one-year-olds are still a bit of an enigma." Only a few were observed by the researchers in

the study area last summer.

In addition, since the study will be utilizing established basin-wide habitat evaluation techniques for rainbow trout, one aspect of the study will be to examine the habitat evaluation techniques themselves to determine if they are also effective for steelhead.

Stark, usually accompanied by Spielman, Brink, or BLM Student Conservation Association volunteer Monica Haycox, took canoes down the Gulkana River to search for specific features that indicate good habitat.

A typical trip began at Dickey Lake, which is clear enough to allow for the visual observation of fish.

"We use polarized glasses to cut surface glare, and just walk in the water," said Stark. "When we come to an area with riffles, we get out of our canoes and try to cast for fish."

In some areas, the water is deep so the researchers would stand up in a canoe and look down in the water. "The water in the Gulkana is so clear, at least for the first thirteen miles, that we can often identify most fish down to six feet," said Stark, "although we can't see the minnows."

The researchers made their way down to Sourdough Creek Campground, where the National Wild River portion of the river ends, conducting tests and collecting data all along the way. "It was challenging trying to catch the fry in the dip net," remembers Haycox. "It was more difficult than fishing!"

By June of 1995, after spending two summers collecting data, UAF will produce a set of study data which will be shared among the cooperating groups. Both Stark and Brink also expect to develop theses from the work done on this project.

"Right now, we don't know where the juveniles are or how to effect good management," says Tol. "This study will provide BLM and other agencies managing in the watershed with crucial information."

—KJ Mushovic



John Spielman

BLM Student Conservation Association volunteer Monica Haycox does a chemical workup of the water at Canyon Falls. Determining chemical factors such as water pH, temperature and alkalinity yields clues to fish locations.



Monica Haycox

Spielman prepares to release a king salmon. Rainbow trout may be found in king salmon areas. A king on the end of a line can mean losing rainbow fishing gear.

Fix-up starts on pipeline problems

Heads of six state and five federal agencies signed an agreement supporting the Joint Pipeline Office and setting up an executive council to strengthen and give policy direction to the office. The council will be co-chaired by the BLM Alaska State Director and the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

Meanwhile, the Joint Pipeline Office has announced that two contractors have been selected to oversee the correction of deficiencies in the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. Stone & Webster of Boston will oversee numerous hardware, systems, and engineering improvements planned for the pipeline. Booz-Allen Hamilton of Maryland will review the Joint Pipeline Office's oversight program and a possible restructure of the office.

BLM's Alaska State Office and the other state and federal agencies represented in the Joint Pipeline Office completed a series of audits of the trans-Alaska pipeline and hired new experts. These actions are designed to put the Joint Pipeline Office on top of numerous criticisms that have been leveled at the management and oversight of the pipeline, which carries a million and a half barrels of oil daily from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez. Evidence of their success came when chief executives of the three major pipeline owner companies—BP, Exxon and ARCO—testified in early November before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight, that their companies would make available whatever financial or other resources Alyeska Pipeline Service Company needs to resolve the problems identified.

The trans-Alaska pipeline

Since startup in 1977, the trans-Alaska pipeline has carried more than nine billion barrels of North Slope crude oil from Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Ocean, 800 miles south across Alaska to the port of Valdez. About 25% of the total U.S. oil production currently flows through this pipeline. At any given time there is about nine million barrels of oil in the line.

The pipeline was built and is operated by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, a consortium of seven large pipeline companies whose parent oil companies hold the leases to the State land where oil was discovered at Prudhoe Bay. Ownership of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. is split as follows:

BP Pipelines (Alaska), Inc.	50.01 %
ARCO Transportation Alaska, Inc.	21.35
Exxon Pipeline Company	20.34
Mobil Alaska Pipeline Company	4.08
Amerada Hess Pipeline Corporation	1.50
Phillips Alaska Pipeline Corporation	1.36
Unocal Pipeline Company	1.36

The Joint Pipeline Office

Established in 1990, the Joint Pipeline Office is composed of nine state and federal regulatory and management agencies. Each of these agencies has responsibilities either for issuing permits or for monitoring the operation and environmental safety of pipelines.

The office was set up to provide an efficient and comprehensive approach to permitting and regulating Alaskan pipelines. State agencies represented in the office include the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Office of the Governor, Division of Governmental Coordination.

Federal agencies include the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Transportation Office of Pipeline Safety, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Coast Guard

Many of the solutions will involve contracts with third party firms that can offer expertise to solve technical and management problems, which are expected to continue to arise as the 20-year-old pipeline ages.

The first major step the Joint Pipeline Office completed was a two-phase contract performed for BLM by Quality Technology Company of Lebo, Kansas. Phase I of the contract involved a 60-day audit of the pipeline. This audit spotlighted numerous problems. Phase II, completed in January, was a series of recommendations to remedy the problems spotlighted by Phase I. These recommendations and findings from other audits will be used as the basis for creating both short- and long-term solutions to problems with the management and oversight of the pipeline.

The Joint Pipeline Office is now grappling with such questions as how the office should be staffed, how monitoring and inspections systems should be put in place, and how regulators can interact most effectively with those being regulated. In searching for the right approaches and answers, both the Joint Pipeline Office and Alyeska are reaching for excellence.

"Having the trans-Alaska pipeline operated at a level that meets bare minimum standards is not the Joint Pipeline Office's goal, nor the goal of Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.," said Assistant Secretary of the Interior Robert Armstrong. "We're interested in watching over an operation which constantly reaches for the next level of excellence. The continuing safe operation of the pipeline is critical to America's energy and environment."

—Rob McWhorter / Jane Mangus

AFS upgrades mountaintop radios

A network of mountaintop radio stations stretching from the Canadian border to the Bering Sea provides the backbone for the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service's communications system. AFS recently completed a two-year project to upgrade the radios.

"The new radios are more reliable," said Don Stichler, chief of the Branch of Communications for AFS. "We've already seen a difference in not having near the down time we had before."

AFS maintains about nine mountaintop radio communication sites for BLM's three northern districts and also provides service to the U.S. Customs Service at stations near the Canadian border, under a reimbursable agreement.

Stichler said the AFS network can tie into the state of Alaska's fire communications system, and through satellites to the global communications system. The radios are located in small fiberglass buildings on 13 mountains or hilltops scattered over the interior of Alaska. Most are powered by solar energy. The radios can send or receive VHF (very high frequency) signals between people in airplanes or on the ground throughout AFS's area of operation.

The mountaintop radios are controlled by headquarter stations at Fort Wainwright, Fort Yukon, Tanana and Galena. When needed, stations are also used at Eagle, Central, Bettles and Dahl Creek.

Stichler said the headquarter stations beam UHF (ultra high frequency) or microwave signals to activate the mountaintop stations. UHF and microwave systems are used for communications over shorter distances than VHF," he said.

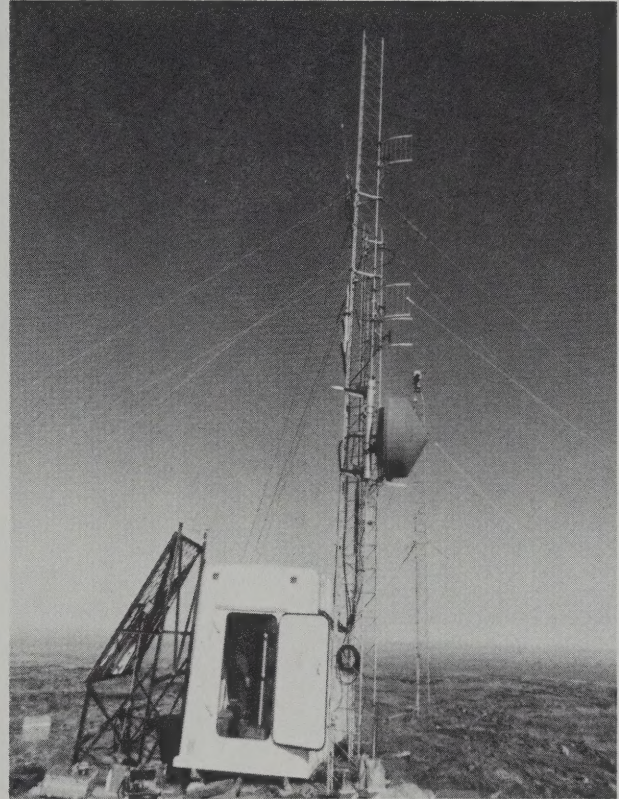
AFS has its own radios and receives additional radio kits from the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise. Radio frequencies are code-named and different frequencies are used in different geographic areas. Large fires are assigned their own frequencies. In addition, contract aircraft monitor the interagency "Airguard" emergency frequency and AFS frequency for management information.

Stichler said hand-held radio kits are distributed to crews as they go out to fires. Repeaters may also be installed on high ground near fires to extend the range of the signals.

The communications network plays a vital role for the BLM's Alaska Fire Service. It provides fast, reliable communication with aircraft and ground personnel in all areas of operations. Without it, safety and efficiency would be greatly impaired.

Stichler said the upgrade involved replacing about 47 radios at the mountaintop sites. Most of the sites are serviced by helicopter and the savings in maintenance costs should be substantial, he said.

—Andy Williams



AFS photo

Radio communications equipment is housed in a small fiberglass building on Totson Mountain near Galena. A solar panel that powers the station is at the left of the building.



AFS photo

An AFS worker performs maintenance at the radio communications site on Totson Mountain.

frontier flashes

Workers at the Cambior Alaska, Inc.'s mine, located in the Glennallen District's Valdez Creek Drainage, unearthed an eight-foot tusk fragment during gold mining operations in February. The tusk, believed to be from a mammoth or mastodon, broke into two pieces, with one piece splitting laterally. It was discovered in a layer of silt, much closer to the surface than previous finds. The specimen has been transported to the University of Alaska Fairbanks museum for stabilization prior to scientific examination.



Active mining claims in Alaska have decreased since 1989 from 27,621 to 21,000. New fees account for much of the decline. Another 9,700 claims will be closing this year, says Lois Simenson, chief of BLM's public services section.



Acting BLM director Mike Dombeck announced he has chosen William C. Calkins to be the new state director for New Mexico. Calkins is currently the acting state director for Alaska.

On February 25, cartographic specialists from BLM's Mapping Sciences Branch flew over Columbia and Bering glaciers in southeast Alaska to shoot aerial photographs for the U.S. Geological Survey. Under an interagency cooperative agreement, cartographers from Alaska BLM are shooting aeriels of several glaciers in Southeast Alaska three to four times each year.

Glaciologists at the Survey use the photos to measure volume, flow and location of the glaciers. This information becomes part of a permanent database to monitor glacial movement and recession over time.



Three BLM employees head up the newly formed Alaska chapter of the American River Management Society. Jake Schlapfer, recreation planner at the Anchorage District Office, is president. Bunny Sterin, Alaska State Office hydrologist, is vice president, and Kathy O'Reilly Doyle, realty specialist in the Tok Field Office, is secretary. Objectives of the society are to educate members, advance the profession, and promote professional development opportunities.

A group of Russian university administrators recently spent several hours studying BLM's mapping techniques. Visiting Alaska on a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development were the rector and three department heads of the Novosibersk Institute of Geodesy, Aerial Survey and Cartography. BLM chief of the branch of examination and records Larry Evans, geologist Greg Balen, cartographic technicians Bruce Ocrassa and Tony Reynolds, photolithographer Charles Luddington, and supervisory cartographic technician Louie Doores all demonstrated the equipment and methods BLM uses for making maps.

"The grant provided funding to bring a group of high-level people to Alaska...so they see both private and public sector work," said John Oswald of LCMF, Ltd., who arranged the tour.

In spite of the language barrier, the men nodded their understanding of everything that was being described. They watched attentively, asked questions at almost every stop, and clustered around any high-tech equipment being demonstrated.



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Chief, External Affairs: David Vickery

Editor: Jane G. Mangus

Editor/design: Janet S. Malone

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